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OTHER FUNDS AND PROGRAMMES

United Nations Volunteers

Report of the Administrator

I. PURPOSE

1. The present report is submitted in accordance with Governing Council decision 92/2. It highlights the dramatic evolution of the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) activities in the humanitarian, peace-building and governance arenas over the past two years as well as the substantial contributions made by UNV to the promotion of human rights, new achievements in community-based endeavours, and future directions reflected in the UNV Strategy 2000. Action is sought from the Executive Board regarding: promotion of crucial UNV support to humanitarian, peace-building and human rights activities of the United Nations system and other international organizations, including through the White Helmets initiative; and the efficient use of resources to continue the exploration of innovative volunteer contributions, including the timing of payments to the Special Voluntary Fund (SVF).

II. UNV: KEY EVENTS OF 1994 TO 1996

A. Actions taken in response to Executive Board decisions since 1994

1. Humanitarian relief and confidence-building

2. Strengthened by the experience gained during the biennium and by the recommendations of the 1994 UNV Fourth Special Consultation, UNV contributions across the development-humanitarian relief-peace spectrum have become a vital

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force within United Nations system missions and operations. Since 1994, close to 2,000 UNV specialists have served in humanitarian operations and peace-building missions of the United Nations. Volunteer roles are particularly relevant in support of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and local community-based groups in countries in crisis. Responding to Executive Board decision 94/9, UNV has considerably diversified its participation in the spectrum of activities from crisis to development. UNV specialists have contributed to crisis prevention, emergency humanitarian relief, electoral assistance and rehabilitation. Major activities undertaken within the framework of United Nations missions include demobilization of former combatants in Mozambique; electoral support in South Africa and Haiti; technical and administrative support in Angola, Liberia, Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia. In recommendation 11 of its recent report entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations System Capacity for Conflict Prevention" (JIU/REP/95/13), the Joint Inspection Unit noted the further potential of UNV by stating that "in order to enhance United Nations system activities addressing root causes of conflicts, the United Nations and specialized agencies should more extensively use the United Nations Volunteers".

3. UNV contributions at the local level have proven to be especially effective and a ready resource in the emerging field of large human rights operations, whether those operations accompany electoral reform or act as stand-alone missions. Hundreds of UNV specialists have served and are serving as human rights monitors, observers and educators or are working to promote and protect the rights of indigenous people: with the Human Rights Field Operations in Rwanda; in Guatemala with the United Nations Human Rights Verification Mission (MINUGUA); and in Haiti with the Organization of American States/United Nations Joint Civilian Mission.

4. Volunteer roles have also proven valuable within innovative approaches designed by UNV in specific, community-focused peace promotion and conflict resolution endeavours, combining international and national volunteers in mixed teams in the Great Lakes region of Africa (Burundi, Rwanda and Zaire) and in some countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States. Fielded to enhance local capacity-building for rehabilitation and community participation, these efforts complement the overall UNV strategy of building bridges between crisis and development in order to contribute towards lasting results. To that end, partnerships and working links have been reinforced with United Nations humanitarian relief organizations, notably the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the World Food Programme (WFP), as well as with the United Nations Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Peace-keeping Operations and the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and the Centre for Human Rights; the Emergency Response Division of UNDP; the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); and the International Organization for Migration.

2. Domestic Development Services: An outreach to the community

5. UNV work in poverty eradication through the Domestic Development Services (DDS) programme continues, with the focus on enhancing the managerial and the

technical capacities of community-based groups, working in particular with women and youth. Operational in over 30 developing countries and with some 200 Government and NGO partners, the impact of DDS is seen through the strengthening of thousands of local groups, the emergence and expansion of village-level, income-generating initiatives and assistance to the most disadvantaged for accessing a variety of support services.

6. In its decision 94/9, the Executive Board requested the Administrator to continue to seek more financial resources for assured and firm funding for the DDS programme. Over the biennium, resources have been contributed by new donors, including Japan, the Netherlands and Switzerland, while Germany has significantly increased its ongoing support. UNDP has confirmed a contribution to DDS from the regional programme for Africa, to be channelled specifically to countries moving from crisis to rehabilitation and reconstruction. While several programme countries have earmarked country-level resources to supplement external support, overall funding for DDS activities still falls far short of the demand, especially in least developed countries.

3. Special Voluntary Fund: Innovative community-focused action

7. In its decision 92/35, the Governing Council authorized UNV to utilize contributions to the SVF for, inter alia, pilot and experimental projects; this has been largely instrumental in permitting UNV to be proactive in exploring and developing, with a wide range of partners, several innovative areas where volunteer contributions have critical roles to play. In Asia, successful programmes focus, for example, on providing volunteer support to the artisan sector through exchanges of barefoot artisan specialists and to poor communities in the Angkor park in Cambodia.

8. In Africa, the SVF has been used strategically to sensitize UNV programme officers to ensure that they provide optimum support to country-level activities that focus on addressing the HIV/AIDS epidemic. In Latin America, a programme launched with SVF funds has assisted local NGOs in several countries to identify common areas for volunteer contributions, to develop and scale up initiatives and to share results through networking. An SVF project in the Arab States, in partnership with the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and with the Arab Gulf Programme for United Nations Development Organizations (AGFUND) support, is testing out volunteer roles in support of community initiatives and is centred on diversifying traditional rural activities and on increasing incomes of vulnerable groups.

9. SVF funds at the global level, complemented by Special Programme Resources, have permitted the launching of a pilot eco-volunteers programme that supports local leaders who have a proven record in generating and implementing low-cost environmentally friendly solutions at the community level. In 10 countries, indigenous knowledge is being put to use and exchanges are taking place among community groups in such areas as water and soil conservation in rural settings and pollution control in urban environments.

10. The Administrator wishes to draw to the attention of Member States that it is particularly helpful when contributions to the Special Voluntary Fund of UNV, including sub-trust fund arrangements, are received as early as possible in the financial year.

4. UNISTAR and TOKTEN

11. The United Nations International Short-Term Advisory Resources (UNISTAR) and the Transfer of Knowledge through Expatriate Nationals (TOKTEN) programmes, which are both under UNV management, continue to perform well. UNISTAR, the private sector development arm of UNV, has increasingly focused its attention on countries in transition. It completed 116 assignments in 21 countries in 1994 and 124 assignments in 18 countries in 1995.

12. UNISTAR work in 1994-1995 was marked by increased collaboration with multinationals such as the Samsung Group and Fiat. The Samsung Group performed a diagnostic audit and assessment of the five largest electronics and electrical engineering enterprises in Uzbekistan. It also provided UNV with $25,000 for sharing, through videos, UNISTAR approaches to private-sector development. Fiat executives, acting as UNISTAR advisers, assisted the Government of Bulgaria to develop joint venture opportunities. Two immediate outcomes resulted: a possible joint venture between Fiat and a car-battery manufacturer, and expanded cooperation with a Bulgarian auto parts supplier. Such successful collaboration may be launched in other countries as well, thanks to a contribution of $625,000 to UNV/UNISTAR from the Government of Italy.

13. UNISTAR has also developed a close working relationship with the Governments of Japan and Turkey. Japan now contributes $200,000 annually to support UNISTAR activities worldwide. Japanese UNISTAR advisers have served in Indonesia, the Philippines, Poland, Saudi Arabia, Uzbekistan and Viet Nam. In cooperation with the Turkish International Cooperation Agency UNISTAR has fielded 20 Turkish UNISTAR advisers to Central Asia. Sectoral coverage included banking, garment manufacturing, and gourmet-food production and export. UNISTAR has also signed cost- and revenue-sharing agreements with management consulting firms in Malaysia, Mexico and Turkey that will allow UNISTAR to operate on a more self-sustaining basis in these countries.

14. TOKTEN continues to provide a unique dimension in short-term technical assistance to the 43 countries that take an active interest in this modality. TOKTEN programmes have been established in several countries over the past two years, including Haiti and Lebanon, as well as the West Bank and Gaza. The Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People has also established a TOKTEN programme, enabling more than 20 expatriate Palestinians to provide high-level support to the Palestinian Authority and other public as well as private entities. TOKTEN completed more than 300 assignments in both 1994 and 1995. Consultancies of note include that of a physician who, following a TOKTEN assignment, became Under-Secretary of State for Health in Cambodia, and of a computer expert who introduced the Internet to a Nigerian university.

15. The limited support that has been available for the work of the UNISTAR and TOKTEN volunteers has been extremely effective in freeing up unique talent and

skills for entrepreneurship development. However, the limited financial resources are a constraint to greater practical contributions from the UNISTAR and TOKTEN programmes.

5. UNV, the first headquarters of a United Nations organization in Germany: New synergies

16. In its decision 95/2, the Executive Board endorsed the proposal of the Secretary-General to accept the offer of the Government of Germany to relocate the headquarters of the United Nations Volunteers programme to Bonn from mid-1996. UNV has since continued wide-ranging discussions with the Government of Germany, the City of Bonn, the Federal State of North-Rhine/Westphalia and various non-governmental institutions in order to develop maximum synergies from the new location.

17. Dialogues regarding programme-related issues have been established with a wide range of partners in the Bonn/Cologne areas and in Germany as a whole. UNV has been invited to participate in and contribute to meetings/workshops organized throughout Germany, including discussions on Bonn as a North-South Centre and special United Nations fiftieth anniversary functions. In order to ensure the maintenance of programme synergies in Geneva with the United Nations system as well as with other organizations, UNV is being particularly proactive in organizing special programme briefing sessions before the move, and in planning with partners a consultative mechanism for the future.

18. Other important milestones include the signing of the Headquarters Agreement by the Administrator and the Government of Germany in November 1995; the doubling of Germany's contribution to UNV programmes and the initiation of a transitional subsidy in 1995; and the designation by the Government of Germany of the landmark Haus Carstanjen complex and park as the site for the UNV headquarters in Bonn, to serve also as a common premise for several United Nations bodies.

19. Programme and administrative aspects of the move are proceeding on schedule. Nevertheless, a major move does present special challenges to an organization during the transition phase. Thus, special support for UNV at this time is particularly important so that the quality, effectiveness, and level of its contributions to development and humanitarian priorities through UNV specialists and fieldworkers worldwide can be maintained.

6. Budget strategy and operational review

20. In its decision 95/28, the Executive Board approved the revised budget estimates for the 1994-1995 biennium and budget estimates for the 1996-1997 biennium in respect of the UNV programme. UNV is actively redesigning its business processes in order to implement fully the corporate downsizing policy embodied in the 1996-1997 UNDP budget strategy.

21. UNV has therefore embarked on further reorganization of its human resources and streamlining of procedures to respond to the ever-increasing demand for UNV

specialists in humanitarian as well as development and democratization activities.

22. To adopt a leaner structure and to be even quicker to respond to requests from programme countries at a time when rapid action is essential, UNV has undertaken a systematic review leading to a simplified headquarters structure to serve UNV partners better. In this context, UNV considers its Cyprus Offshore Centre, created in response to Governing Council decision 91/46, as an appropriate tool to reduce its administrative costs by outsourcing a number of routine functions to the offshore location. In addition to volume-intensive data entry, roster and inquiry functions currently being undertaken, it is planned to transfer a range of other tasks, including routine administrative functions, to Cyprus after an assessment of the Centre, scheduled for early 1996.

7. UNV and the successor programming arrangements

23. In its decision 95/28, the Executive Board took note of the cost-savings that will occur on the relocation of UNV headquarters to Bonn and urged the UNDP Administrator, in light of these savings, to increase programme activities involving UNV. A letter was sent by the Administrator in September 1995 to all UNDP Resident Repr..entatives encouraging them to utilize international and national volunteers for talents not available within UNDP, as a means of strengthening country-level capacity in key thematic areas and public information. The guidelines for the execution and implementation of the new successor programming arrangements make recommendations for the use of UNV specialists and fieldworkers and TOKTEN and UNISTAR advisers to support successful national execution.

B. Other important programme directions towards the year 2000

1. Strategy 2000

24. The UNV Strategic Approach, 1993-1996, identified four main windows of UNV activity: classic technical cooperation for development, support to community-based initiatives, peace-related activities of the United Nations, and humanitarian relief and rehabilitation activities of the United Nations system. The basis of the next strategic approach, called Strategy 2000, is that with the reduced resource outlook for the United Nations as a whole, it is even more important to work in strategic partnerships. UNV will, with UNDP and the United Nations system, contributor and partner countries and civil society organizations, give special attention to supporting volunteer movements and initiatives. UNV will strive to strengthen and maintain responsiveness to its primary partners and beneficiaries, on issues ranging from emergency relief to poverty eradication, notably within programmes that are also pro-jobs, pro-women and pro-nature. UNV will be especially proactive on priority issues emanating from global summits and those that lend themselves to community-focused volunteer actions such as: the spectrum from crisis to development; HIV/AIDS; and the urban environment. Countries of initial focus will be the least

developed and those in crisis, with emphasis on the cross-cutting issues of women's roles in and benefits from development. Effective resource management, both of human capacities and financial contributions, will be given importance. The excellent work of the UNV specialists and fieldworkers will be further promoted.

2. White Helmets initiative

25. Strategic alliances with other international actors, specifically with the White Helmets, an initiative of Argentina, represent a step towards the development of teams of volunteers - available on a stand-by basis through national volunteer corps - to enable rapid UNV support to humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and development. In its resolution 1995/44 of 27 July 1995, the Economic and Social Council took note with interest of the report of the Secretary-General on the White Helmets (A/50/203-E/1995/79 and Add.1). Thereafter, the General Assembly adopted resolution 50/19 of 28 November 1995. Based on its existing capacity and within the established mandates of the United Nations system, UNV has been given a key role in developing cooperation frameworks and activities and serving as the operational arm of the White Helmets initiative, and providing the required mechanism for its effective implementation.

26. Strategic points of entry to ensure the effective mobilization of volunteer resources for national and/or international service have been identified during initial exploratory missions undertaken by UNV and the White Helmets Commission of Argentina, together with the United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs, UNDP, and other United Nations system partners. Identified needs and pilot projects include a wide variety of activities, for example: electoral support and urban food production in Armenia; enhanced food delivery with WFP in Haiti; support to the reintegration of ex-combatants and reconstruction in the aftermath of crisis in Angola; engineering support for the infrastructure of Gaza; vocational training for Palestinian ex-detainees; rehabilitation of medical facilities in Jamaica; and human rights support with the Human Rights Verification Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA) in Guatemala. To promote local capacity and the viability of specific volunteer interventions, UNV and the White Helmets Commission are collaborating to attract new partners and formulating resource mobilization strategies for this initiative. So far, Germany and Spain have joined with financial support.

3. The UNV contribution over a quarter of a century

27. On 1 January 1996, the UNV programme completed 25 years of successful operations. It is an appropriate time to take stock of the particular contributions that UNV specialists and field workers have been able to make to the agendas of the United Nations for peace and development, and for democratization. This stocktaking will be possible, inter alia, in meetings planned with United Nations specialized agency partners, in events organized and publications produced by UNV cooperating organizations and national focal points, and in the context of renewed synergies from the new location in Bonn. The anniversary will, of course, also provide an opportunity to secure greater

visibility for the work of volunteers and of the UNV programme in particular, in the developing and donor countries that participate as providers or hosts - or both - of UNV specialists and fieldworkers.

III. EXECUTIVE BOARD ACTION

28. The Executive Board may wish to:

1. Note the increased and successful contribution of the United Nations Volunteers programme in humanitarian, peace-keeping, peace-building, human rights and rehabilitation activities as well as in poverty eradication;

2. Encourage the relevant organizations of the United Nations system and other international bodies to make even greater use of UNV specialists and fieldworkers in the full spectrum of development, humanitarian and peace activities, particularly in view of recommendation 11 of the Joint Inspection Unit, contained in its report on strengthening of the United Nations system capacity for conflict prevention (JIU/REP/95/13);

3. Recognize the work being undertaken by the United Nations Volunteers through the Special Voluntary Fund in developing innovative roles for volunteers in support of community efforts and recommend that Governments and United Nations system entities work in partnership with the United Nations Volunteers to replicate successful results at the country level;

4. Urge Member States to increase their contributions to the Special Voluntary Fund for activities of the United Nations Volunteers, the United Nations Short-Term Advisory Resources and the Transfer of Knowledge through Expatriate Nationals;

5. Also urge countries to expedite the transmittal of their contributions to the United Nations Volunteers, including trust-fund arrangements;

6. Support the added responsibility of the United Nations Volunteers as the operational arm of the White Helmets initiative and invite Member States to provide the necessary financial support for the effective implementation of this initiative.

Annex

UNITED NATIONS VOLUNTEERS
RESOURCE PLANNING TABLE

I. PROJECTED RESOURCE AVAILABILITY AND UTILIZATION OF SPECIAL VOLUNTARY FUND
(In millions of United States Dollars)

	1994	1995	Projected 1996	1997
Available Resources				
Balance as at 1 January	9.16	9.74	12.86	13.11
Voluntary contributions	1.59	1.84	4.00	4.00
Interest and other income	0.96	1.44	1.50	1.50
Offset of external costs (from project budgets)	4.37	4.75	5.00	5.00
Subtotal	16.08	17.77	23.36	23.61
Utilization of resources				
Expenditure				
External costs	4.60	3.26	4.75	5.50
Pilot projects	1.74	1.65	5.50	6.00
Subtotal	6.34	4.91	10.25	11.50
Balance of resources as at 31 December	9.74	12.86	13.11	12.11
Commitment for future years as at 31 December				
(a) External costs for serving volunteers	3.96	4.53	4.75	4.75
(b) Experimental pilot projects	2.87	2.47	4.00	4.00
Subtotal	6.83	7.00	8.75	8.75
Estimated surplus (deficit) as at 31 December	**2.91**	**5.86**	**4.36**	**3.36**
(a) Experimental pilot projects	1.39	3.27	1.74	1.24
(b) Balance available for serving volunteers	1.52	2.59	2.62	2.12
	2.91	**5.86**	**4.36**	**3.36**
Total number of serving volunteers (end December)	**2145**	**2190**	**2200**	**2200**

II. PROJECTED SOURCE OF REVENUE FOR UNV ACTIVITIES
(In millions of United States Dollars)

	1994	1995	Projected 1996	1997
For project budgets				
UNDP resources (IPF, SPR, etc)	24.25	18.82	20.00	20.00
UNV programme officers	1.82	2.21	2.50	2.50
UN system organizations	9.89	16.05	12.00	12.00
UNV Special Voluntary Fund contributions and funds-in-trust	15.26	15.50	20.20	20.20
Total	**51.22**	**52.58**	**54.70**	**54.70**